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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 006028

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FROM USMISSION UNESCO

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: USUNESCO: UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE TO LAUNCH
DEBATE ON MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY

REFS: A) Paris 5862

1. Summary and comment: Influencing the agenda of UNESCO's October 2005 General Conference will be preliminary discussions of the organization's medium-term strategy (2008-14). The negotiation process -- leading up to adoption of a new medium-term strategy by the October 2007 general conference -- offers an opportunity to shape UNESCO's mission into the next decade. This is the first time that consultations on the medium-term strategy have started so far in advance of the target date for adoption, an initiative intended to give member states more control over the process. Given the novelty of this approach, some of the process is still TBD. Devising an appropriate roadmap for drafting in conjunction with like-minded states is a first important challenge. End summary and comment.

CRAFTING A NEW MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY FOR UNESCO

2. For the first time, UNESCO's member states will launch discussion of the medium term plan (C4) well in advance of its scheduled adoption (at the 2007 General Conference), to ensure that they have maximum input to the resulting strategy document. At the upcoming General Conference, the debate on the new medium-term strategy will start from scratch. Principle priorities of the various sectors will not necessarily carry over into the next exercise; the idea of even having principle priorities -- a Matsuura initiative -- will also be on the table. (NOTE: As an example, the Nordic States and the UK are tabling a draft resolution to study the Natural Sciences and SHS sectors; this study is meant to inform the medium-term planning process, ref A.) Strong U.S. interventions at this debate will be a way to demonstrate leadership.

3. At the General Conference, the Medium-term strategy for 2008-2014 is on the agenda for discussion at each of the five "program" commissions: General questions and program support; education; natural science/social and human sciences; culture; and communication. The debate will take the form of 7-10 minute interventions by member states. The debates in Commission will probably begin with a presentation by UNESCO Director for Strategic Planning Hans D'Orville, who will outline the drafting procedure, as well as ideas that might be addressed by the new medium-term strategy. At this point, the medium-term strategy is not on the agenda of the plenary sessions of the General Conference, although the Secretariat says member states are free to address this

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issue in the General Policy debate.

4. The next step is to translate the ideas evoked during the General Conference debate into fodder for the Regional consultations led by National Commissions that will take place spring/summer 2006. One mechanism would be for interested member states to participate in a drafting group that would craft a resolution conveying the instructions of the General Conference to the Secretariat and to the Regional Groups. (During a recent

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cycle, Executive Board President Canada chaired an 18-member task force "UNESCO for the 21st century" that, among its other functions, informed the medium-term planning process.) The reports of the regional consultation meetings will be the basis of the preliminary draft mid-term strategy that the Secretariat will present to the Fall 2006 Executive Board. Debate and revision will continue at Executive Board meetings that will take place in the Spring and Fall of 2007. The new medium-term plan (2008-14) will be adopted at the Fall 2007 General Conference.

5. Outline of Drafting Process for Medium-Term Strategy (2008-14):

October, 2005 General Conference
Medium-Term plan 2008-2014 is on the agenda for
discussion at the five program commissions.

Spring/Summer 2006 Regional Consultations
National Commissions of each of UNESCO's regional groups
meet in regions to flesh out ideas presented at the
General Conference, submitting input to the Secretariat.

Fall 2006, Executive Board
Secretariat presents preliminary draft of Medium-Term

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Plan, based on regional input.

Spring/Fall 2007 Executive Boards
Preliminary draft of Medium-Term Plan debated and
revised.

Fall 2007, General Conference
Medium Term Plan adopted by member states.

GENEVA GROUP COUNTRIES TO EXPLORE COORDINATED APPROACH -----

16. At a September 1 Geneva group meeting, the Medium-term
strategy was evoked briefly. Most participants did not
have a clear idea regarding the process to be followed.
Canada stressed the opportunities for pro-active
participation by member states afforded by early debate
of the medium-term strategy. The Geneva Group decided to
revisit the issue at its September 12 meeting; one option
to consider will be the organization of an informal
drafting group to craft a General Conference resolution.

17. Delegation's recommendations regarding UNESCO's
Medium Term Strategy (2008-2014) to follow septel.

OLIVER